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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### *Time Management Tips for Working Parents*

Being a parent is a 24-hour a day job. When you add house cleaning, shopping, your job, and all the rest of your life's to-dos, it may seem impossible to do everything that needs to be done. The following tips on managing your time at home may help you feel more organized and create a less stressful home:

- Pre-plan meals for one week, and be sure to have all ingredients on hand. Get input from all family members.
- Get every family member involved in household chores.
- Make enough for more than one meal. Freeze the extra for another day.
- Pair a parent and a child when doing chores. It is a great time to catch up on what has been going on in your lives.
- Formulate a morning plan so everyone gets adequate bathroom time.
- Schedule a regular "family meeting" time.
- Make lunches the night before so mornings can be more relaxed.
- Schedule homework and play time into your family's schedule.
- Make clothing choices the night before.

Following these simple steps may help to ease the frustration of having too much to do and not enough time to do it.



Do you have frustrating days when someone at work drives you a little bit nuts? Is there a difficult boss, co-worker, or customer who repeatedly gets on your nerves?

"You're not alone," says Len Felder, Ph.D., a psychologist in West Los Angeles and author of *Does Someone At Work Treat You Badly?* Felder suggests, "A major factor in being successful at work is learning how to stay healthy, clear-minded and thoroughly professional when you're faced with extremely difficult people."

For example, if you are confronted often by a volatile, impatient or verbally assaultive individual at work, here are some of the costs you might be facing:

### *IS THIS PERSON GETTING TO YOU?*

1. Do you feel tongue-tied or frozen inside, unable to function at your best after a verbal assault from this difficult person?
2. Do you sometimes think about quitting because this person has soured your feelings about your job or career?
3. Do you sometimes get caught up in thoughts of revenge or getting back at this person for mistreating you?
4. Are you beginning to notice physical symptoms - headaches, stomach problems, back tensions, itchy skin rashes, or increased susceptibility to colds and

flu's - because of your repeated encounters with this toxic person?

5. Does working with an angry or impatient person cause you to make more mistakes, forget things, or hold back your creativity or good ideas?

6. Does working with a verbally assaultive person wear you down such that you are becoming more impatient and short tempered with your loved ones?

### *WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT*

According to Dr. Felder, there are several positive steps you can take to improve your health and personal effectiveness when confronted by even the most difficult bosses, co-workers or customers. He advises:

1. **Protect Yourself by Using a Silent Refocusing Technique.** Anyone who has studied meditation knows that even in the middle of stormy chaos you can regain your calm and strength by repeating a silent word or phrase. When an angry or verbally abusive person begins to speak, say to yourself silently over and over again: "Hear the valuable stuff. Ignore the anger. It's not yours." No matter how insulting or oppressive the other person acts, you can maintain your inner strength and your professionalism by staying focused and alert as you repeat this simple phrase.

2. **Find the Vulnerable Spot.** It helps to notice something imperfect, awkward or humorous about



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the other person so that you won't feel one-down or intimidated. For instance, silently look over and find something about this angry person's physical appearance, way of moving, or way of speaking that is vulnerable or humorous. Or say to yourself, "I'm glad I'm not this person's gall bladder" or "I'm glad I'm not this person's spouse or offspring."

3. Use a Comeback Line That Shows Caring and Professionalism. Rather than being defensive or argumentative, the best way to handle a verbally aggressive person is to show concern and take the lead in offering to help this irate person to find a solution to the problem. In other words, don't become this person's enemy but rather become this person's strong and professional ally right from the start.

You can calm even the most volatile customer by saying, "Let me write this down. I really want to make sure I get what you're saying here." Just pulling out a pad of paper and starting to write down this person's concerns will force him or her to speak slower and to start treating you like a trusted ally.

Or you can calm an explosive or irate boss by saying, "Let's make sure we get this thing handled right this time. You go first and I won't interrupt until you're done. I want to hear exactly what you need." Instead of being a passive doormat for the other person's anger, you've now established that you are professional and actively involved in the solution. This will show over time that you deserve respect and trust, rather than additional verbal abuse.

#### *HMS is here to help*

If you are troubled by a particularly difficult situation at work, Human Management Services (HMS) can help you. We're here to assist you with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

## Checklist For Selecting Child Care

Whatever your child's age, finding the right child care can be a challenge. The following checklist will help you find the pre-school or day care center that suits you best:

### *STEP 1: CONDUCT A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW: key questions to ask*

- \_\_\_\_\_ How long has your school been operating?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are you state licensed? Any accreditation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What are your days and hours? Are they flexible?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What do you charge per week/per month? Includes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What educational background do your teachers have?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the program structured or unstructured?

If the responses sound and feel comfortable to you, set up an in-person interview.

### *STEP 2. CHECKLIST FOR AN IN-PERSON INTERVIEW: check for the following*

#### Evaluate The Setting

- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the center have a license that meets state regulations?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the care provider have adequate education, training, and proper credentials?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask for references from past employers or other parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the care provider have procedures in case of emergency?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the center safe? (Covered outlets, no sharp corners, cleaners out of reach, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inquire into sanitary procedures. Do staff and children wash their hands regularly, and particularly after diaper changes or before food preparation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have fire extinguishers been inspected recently and have smoke detectors been installed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do they have liability insurance?

#### Evaluate The Care Providers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the staff members friendly and helpful?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you trust them?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do the care providers treat the children as individuals?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are they involved with the children or do they just provide basic needs?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do they show patience with the kids?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do they have a sense of humor and seem warm and affectionate?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are they in good physical condition and able to play with the kids?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you approve of their methods of toilet training and other self-help skills?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are their philosophical or religious beliefs compatible with yours?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do they seem open to communication with you?

#### Evaluate The Environment And The Program

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the atmosphere cheerful and pleasant?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there an adequate play area - both indoors and outside?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are there adequate toys which are clean and well-maintained?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are activities and rest periods scheduled or flexible?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the activities creative and interesting?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a drop-in policy for parents?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a mechanism for the home/day care transition and vice versa?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does this provider and setting allow personal attention for your child?

Human Management Services (HMS) can assist you with child care referrals or other help with child care or parenting issues. We're here to help.

## HMS SERVICES

### PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186

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